

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Social Work and Health

Council Meeting: 27 May 2009

Subject: Partnership working between “Breathing Space” (NHS 24), Community Planning Partnership, Community Health Partnership, Macmillan Cancer Support and West Dunbartonshire Council

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The report sets out the latest service development emerging from our unique partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support. The Council is asked to support the implementation of a 12 month pilot project to support people affected by cancer through a unique listening, advice and signposting service throughout West Dunbartonshire to promote greater public awareness of these issues and to encourage local people to seek help earlier.
- 1.2 Council’s approval for a formal recognition of the Service’s launch and the role of NHS24 is also sought.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council’s partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support involves a range of partners all dedicated to improving a network of advice and care to people affected by cancer.
- 2.2 The “Breathing Space” telephone line based at NHS24 aims to be an accessible ‘first stop’ for those suffering depression or low mood, and to provide assistance at an early stage to stop problems from escalating. Highly skilled advisors, who are also trained in cancer awareness, will be available to offer listening, advice and provide further contacts for those who call.
- 2.3 This initiative is timely in its proposal in view of the recent publication by the Scottish Government of *‘Better Cancer Care, An Action Plan’* (October 2008). In this document the Government set out its priorities in offering appropriate care for cancer patients and carers.
- 2.4 It will help NHS performance in meeting the health efficiency access to treatment (HEAT) targets to reduce the increase in the prescribing of antidepressant medication and complement the work currently done by “Breathing Space” as well as the current pilot at NHS24 entitled NHS Living Life. The Scottish Government and funding from Macmillan will resource the pilot in its first year. If successful the service will be developed across Scotland.

- 2.5 Macmillan Cancer Support would promote Breathing Space as a first point of contact with people affected by cancer to provide additional emotional support in dealing with their situation and to provide onward referral to appropriate local support services already established across West Dunbartonshire.
- 2.6 “Breathing Space”, Macmillan Cancer Support and Social Work Services propose a pilot project targeting patients and families within West Dunbartonshire. Statistical evidence confirms that there are over 500 newly diagnosed cancer cases per year within the local authority area. The Council’s advice and care services in partnership with the NHS and Macmillan reach 95% of new cases.
- 2.7 The proposed pilot project would require all partner organisations to work directly with Breathing Space and Macmillan and advertise the initiative throughout the charity’s information network. The service will also be promoted through awareness-raising events, information materials, and to council staff and at the Beatson, West of Scotland Cancer Treatment Centre. Detailed discussions have been held with the Council’s Libraries Service to take on a lead role in publicising the service.
- 2.8 Patients and carers will receive support from a service skilled in the delivery of a therapeutic listening, advice and signposting whose staff are experienced in providing emotional support to individuals who present with a variety of complex needs. The new service will provide a resource for General Practitioners, nursing staff, social work services and NHS 24 colleagues who will have in their toolkit a source of emotional support to which they can refer people affected by cancer out with the normal working day. Prior to the launch significant levels of training will be provided by Macmillan Cancer Support.

3. Launch Arrangements

- 3.1 It is hoped that a Scottish Government Minister or Cabinet Secretary will lead the formal launch. Given the importance of the local partnership and the significant role NHS24 has for West Dunbartonshire it may be appropriate for the Provost to offer to lead the Council’s role in welcoming the launch to West Dunbartonshire.

4. Main issues

- 4.1 The new service can provide its expertise to all people affected by cancer in West Dunbartonshire area.
- 4.2 Consistent with the Scottish Government’s *‘Better Cancer Care, An Action Plan’* the new service can form an integral part of the appropriate rehabilitation and support services that are made available for people affected by a cancer diagnosis in West Dunbartonshire.
- 4.3 All appropriate staff at Breathing Space will be provided with appropriate training in cancer awareness by Macmillan Cancer Support and updated regularly on the

key issues that affect patients and carers. Call volumes will be monitored throughout to measure the demands on the service.

5. Personnel Issues

5.1 There are no personnel issues.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 There are no risks attached to our support of the project.

8. Conclusions and Officers' Recommendations

8.1 The Council is asked to support ongoing partnership working to achieve the aims set out within this report and other improvements for people affected by cancer within the West Dunbartonshire local authority area.

8.2 The Council invites the Provost to play a lead role in welcoming the service's launch in West Dunbartonshire.

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Appendix:	None
Background Papers:	None
Wards Affected:	All